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The Long Road: Methodism in North Carolina

This thesis has been approved by the following committee
of the Faculty of the Graduate School at the Woman's College
of the University of North Carolina, Greensboro, North Carolina.

by

Gertrude Walton Atkins

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Randall Jarrell
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APPROVAL SHEET

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ACT I

MUSIC: "INTROITS AND GRADUALS" (AUSGBURG) FADES INTO "OLD TIME RELIGION" AS STAGE LIGHTS ON FULL REVEAL A ROUGHLY-DRESSED MAN OF PIONEER STOCK. HE HUMS "OLD TIME RELIGION" AS HE RUMMAGES THROUGH AN ANCIENT DOME-TOPPED TRUNK, PULLING OUT ARTICLES SUCH AS A SADDLEBAG, OILSKIN-COVERED QUAKER HAT, TUNING FORK, BLACK FROCK COAT, AND MANY BOOKS. HE PICKS UP A LARGE BLACK BOOK AND WALKS TO STAGE RIGHT TO THE ROSTRUM. HE OPENS THE BOOK, PEERS AT IT, PUTS ON HIS SPECTACLES, PEERS AGAIN AT THE PRINTED PAGE, THEN LOOKS OVER HIS GLASSES MISCHIEVOUSLY AS HE LAUGHS HEARTILY.

PIONEER: Fooled you, didn't I? Thought I was going to read you out of this? That be a bobble if I ever heared one. I can't read. (SLAMS BOOK CLOSED) Now don't go blinking your blooming lamps at me. I'm the same as most folks in these parts. Too busy to learn to read, even if there be a body wanting to learn me, and there ain't. Even if I be wanting to learn, and I don't. Ain't no book going to tell me to plant corn when the oak leaf's the size of a squirrel ear, or how to clear trees, grub stumps, hunt bear and sometime Injuns. Reading books don't help bread my family, and there be a passel of us with all them young'uns and the old woman who be at me all the time. Not even time enough to slip away to

the grog shop down by the settlement. 'Course, I make better'n they sell any day, but it's nice to have a fellow to jaw with once a while.

(POINTS TO BOOK) But this here book, I know all it's about, just like I'd a-knowed that trunk was belonging to a Methodist preacher. Nobody else would be wanting to wear clothes like that and carry all them books about. That one was a preacher right here in North Carolina afore he got sent to Kentucky, and that's all that come back of him. 'Course you folks know it didn't start in North Carolina. Methodism was brung over from the Old Country. My paw remembered it back in England. Somebody come to the prison where he was at and converted him, and then they let him loose to come over here. He hadn't done nothing bad, but he was mighty glad to get out and come over here. I always thought things must've been something terrible over there to make him to like it here. But let's stop pollyfoxing around and get on with it. A fellow by name of John Wesley was the one who started it all.

STAGE DARK.

VOICE: "The world is my parish," he said,
And that parish included the New World
And the wilderness that was North Carolina.
It was not a new church
Or a new doctrine

Wesley would establish.
It was the Old Church,
The Church of England,
With a new vitality,
And some called it Methodism.
Methodism was barely born
When the call came from the New World.
It was not easy to get men
To embark on frail ships
For a dismal frontier where savages prowled
And living was a long, laborious ordeal.
Yet the pioneer,
This homespun, stolid, ragged creature,
Alone in the desolation of a new country,
Needed God as much as
The sinners on Piccadilly Circus.
So preachers were sent
To the wilderness that was America.
They were not ordained.
They had no authority but to spread the Gospel.
They did not lay claim to represent a church,
Only a society.
Their purpose: to preach
The doctrine of Methodism
And kindle a land into flame with its heat.
One of the first of these

Was Joseph Pilmoor by name, a solemn man,
Who came to the waste land that was North Carolina,
Where few knew God
And those who did
Not very well.

JOSEPH PILMOOR IS SEATED AT A TABLE WITH A LIGHTED CANDLE. HE PICKS UP A QUILL AND READS ALOUD AS HE WRITES IN HIS JOURNAL.

PILMOOR: "On the twenty-seventh day of September, 1772, I took leave of my friends for a little while and set out for North Carolina. The day was very hot, and my way was through woods. I called at many little houses along the way but could get nothing for my horse until late in the afternoon when I found a little ordinary where I dined. I resolved to stop there all the night. In the evening several countrymen came who desired to speak with me. We spent our time in agreeable conversation, singing and prayer."

MUSIC: "BOUND FOR CANAAN." LIGHT FADES ON PILMOOR AS SPOT TURNS ON PIONEER AT STAGE RIGHT.

PIONEER: (SCRATCHING AND STRETCHING AS HE TALKS) He was on his way bright and early the next morning and got to Currituck Courthouse just as the sun got high ahead. He didn't go sashaying around looking for sinners but got right on to preaching soon as his foot was out the sturp. I can almost hear him now. "He shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost and

with fire." He made them folks set up and take note, he did. None of us was Methodists then except the Colonel. That be Colonel Hallowell Williams, who took the preacher home to bed and board. That made him the first North Carolinian to board a Methodist preacher, don't it? (HOLDS UP ONE FINGER) And of course, Mr. Pilmoor was the first preacher sent out by Mr. Wesley to preach in these parts. (HOLDS UP SECOND FINGER) Then of course, Currituck Courthouse was the first preaching place for Methodist hereabouts. (HOLDS UP THIRD FINGER) A heap of firsts, ain't it?

PIONEER MOVES FROM RIGHT TO STAGE CENTER, TALKING AS HE WALKS. THE SPOTLIGHT FOLLOWS HIM. LIGHT UP ON STAGE AS HE REACHES A HEAVILY-LADEN TABLE AT WHICH MRS. WILLIAMS, COLONEL WILLIAMS, AND MR. PILMOOR ARE SEATED.

PIONEER: Mrs. Williams, the Colonel's wife, be a London lady, but she sets a mighty fine table. There was hopping John, snaps, fresh corn, cranberries, and a wild turkey the Colonel trapped over at Grassy Lick. The preacher really ate after that bird. We even had to turn the other side afore he pushed away from the table with a bellyful.

PIONEER MOVES AROUND TABLE REMOVING DISHES.

MRS. WILLIAMS: I do declare, Mr. Pilmoor, that was the finest sermon I ever did hear. I don't know when I've had one to move me so much.

COLONEL: And very fitting to open your campaign for converts in North Carolina.

MR. PILMOOR: It was the Lord's doing. He made his word like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces.

COLONEL: And our people rejoiced to hear the truth.

MRS. WILLIAMS: We need a strong religion more than anything in this wilderness. There are hardships enough, and we are hungry for many things - home, friends, familiar faces. And what I wouldn't give for one good yellow fog in London! But our deepest hunger is for religion, real religion.

COLONEL: There's a chapel down the way a piece. That's where you're going to preach tomorrow, Brother Pilmoor, at Coinjock. It's a Church of England chapel, but they are pleased to have you preach for them. It'll be a mite of a change from the formal service they usually have.

MRS. WILLIAMS: I should say so. Why, do you know they wear the same vestments and have the same service here that they have at Westminster? But these people are not of London and can hardly imagine what life there must be like. They are a simple people, and they want a simple religion.

COLONEL: They like to think of God as someone real who has been seen before and might be seen again by someone worthy of the privilege.

PILMOOR: The God of the Methodists, Mrs. Williams. The God I bring. I must tell you with what hesitation I embarked for these shores. On the long voyage over, I wrestled long with my fears. I prayed to God for strength, not knowing he had paved the way for our success with loyal followers of the faith such as you.

COLONEL: I understand Philadelphia has a society of one hundred or more.

PILMOOR: Many times that number now. The last time I preached in Philadelphia, fifty times that many gathered to hear.

MRS. WILLIAMS: But where can you find a church to hold so many? It would take St. Paul's in London, and then half would be left standing.

PILMOOR: They would indeed if we used a building. Instead we use God's original temple, the earth with the heavens above.

MRS. WILLIAMS: You preach out of doors? I never heard of such a thing.

PILMOOR: In England we are denied pulpits in many places. It was George Whitefield who first preached in the open. They barred him from the church in Bristol, so he stood on a knoll to speak.

MRS. WILLIAMS: I've heard of Mr. Whitefield. He came through

North Carolina some years ago.

COLONEL: Someone told me you could hear him a mile away when he preached, and when he sang, his voice carried two miles.

PILMOOR: And that was the truth too. I had not preached out of doors myself until one Sunday afternoon shortly after my arrival. During a walk I noted a stage that had been erected for horseracing, to take place that very evening. The thought that they would erect a stage for a horse race but not for a messenger of the Lord put anger in my heart. I mounted the stage in rage to berate such a sport, showing how ridiculous it is for men of sense to ride many miles to see two or three horses run about a field with negroes on their back. Before I had finished, thousands had gathered around. Since that occasion when so many were brought to the Lord, I always speak out-of-doors when given the opportunity.

COLONEL: And a blessing it must be. Methodist societies in this country are like angels' visits - few and far between.

MRS. WILLIAMS: It is a splendid idea, Brother Pilmoor. It would be hard to imagine a Church of England service held beneath the sky.

COLONEL: One thing you said earlier this evening interested me. You mentioned a new kind of gathering you had introduced in Baltimore. You said it was a meeting for just a few members

but not an actual service.

PILMOOR: I call them "intercessions," but most of our members call them "prayer meetings," which is really what they are. They meet for prayer and hymn-singing every week.

COLONEL: Could Mrs. Williams and I organize such a group when you have departed?

PILMOOR: That would be my ultimate intention, Colonel Williams. By leaving such groups in our wake, our work continues after we have gone.

LIGHTS DIM ON STAGE. SINGLE SPOT ON MRS. WILLIAMS AS SHE APPROACHES STAGE CENTER

MRS. WILLIAMS: Colonel Williams accompanied Brother Pilmoor to Coinjock Chapel the next day and the next and the next and throughout his first tour of North Carolina. The colony proved a fertile ground for the new society. But can you imagine what our state was like at the turn of the century ? There wasn't a respectable road to be found, and railroads were unheard of in 1800. The only outlets from mountains to sea were wagon ruts, curling through the wild country to Charleston, Wilmington, or some other coastal town. The loom in the home, the blacksmith shop by the road, the ponderous mill wheel by the creek, the frowsy clump of grog shops and grocery stores, these were the center of community life and family. Edenton,

Wilmington, New Bern, and Washington, these were the only post offices in the early days. There wasn't a newspaper west of Raleigh in 1812. Books were few. The cost of letters was prohibitive. Isolated, without schools, newspapers, books, the masses were rich ground in which to plant a new faith, a faith like Methodism. Methodism offered the frontier a vivid, thundering, omnipotent Jehovah, not the placid God of the Church of England. Methodism offered them hope, "a world beyond this world." Methodism offered, through Christ's death, salvation for all men, without reservation, without distinction, all men free and equal in the eyes of God.

LIGHT FADES ON MRS. WILLIAMS AT STAGE CENTER. SPOT ON PIONEER AT RIGHT.

PIONEER: She make it sound easy, don't she? Just like a woman. It was about as easy as stomping eel in a fast stream. Truth of the matter is this new society was just getting to started good when the war come along and bungled things.

"Taxation without representation." (PIONEER SPITS FORCIBLY)

I don't know exactly what it means, but it sounds smart, and dang it - beg your pardon - but I hate them taxes. (SPITS AGAIN) I'd as soon shoot a revenue officer as a bear, if the good Lord would forgive me. So we cleaned our guns and started aiming at redcoats instead of red Indians and bears.

MUSIC: "YANKEE DOODLE." LIGHT ON PIONEER FADES. LIGHT ON

MRS. WILLIAMS AT STAGE CENTER.

MRS. WILLIAMS: The Revolutionary War shattered the forces of the Methodist Society and all religious societies in North Carolina. It looked like ruin and destruction forever. The people turned against the Methodist preachers, linked as they were with the Church of England. Actually, it mattered little. When the Methodist ministers, so recently from England, saw the war clouds gathering, they commended the Americans to God and set sail as quickly as possible for their native land.

All except one: Francis Asbury. "I can by no means agree to leave such a field for gathering souls to Christ as we have in America," he said. "Nor is it the part of a good shepherd to leave his flock in time of danger." As battles raged, bringing death, the Revolution was cradling life, the life of a new republic and the life of a new church. American independence meant Methodist independence. The Methodist Society of England became the Methodist Episcopal Church of America.

The Christmas Conference was held in Lovely Lane Chapel in Baltimore on December twenty-fourth, 1784. It was probably the most important conference in the history of Methodism. The church with such a beautiful name was really a rude structure, but they were so proud to entertain the Methodist ministers. They put in a large stove and even backed some of the benches, to assure the comfort of the sixty preachers gathered. A new

church destined to become the largest Protestant denomination in America came into existence, unheralded except for the strong voices of its ministers raised in prayer and singing.

MUSIC: "O FOR A THOUSAND TONGUES"

Just four months later the first conference of this new Methodist church was held. Since most of the members and ministers were in the South, it was held in North Carolina at the home of Major Green Hill. Spring was early that year. The last snows had melted. Warm vapors rose from the sun-soothed earth. Here and there, delicate as lace, were green patches of spring grass. Here a score of ministers gathered to partake of Major Hill's hospitality.

LIGHT FADES ON MRS. WILLIAMS. SPOT ON PIONEER AT ROSTRUM AT RIGHT.

PIONEER: Major Green Hill was a high-up man in North Carolina in them days. He was a soldier and a chaplain in the North Carolina Militia. Like most quality folks, he had slaves, lots of them. Nobody thought much about it them. Later on he was in the Congress. He done a lot of things like that. And this here's the place all them preachers, twenty or more, from Virginia and North and South Carolina, gathered for their first meeting.

Here's where they all slept, there in that upper room on

the second floor. They was side by side, not on beds, but on thin blankets throwed out on the floor. How you suppose they got to Louisburg? The good Lord didn't give them no wings. They come ever mile of the way on horseback, stopping at cabins along the way to sleep and feed their horses. Maybe they got a bite to eat theirselves if they was lucky.

MUSIC: "AND ARE WE YET ALIVE?" IT HAS OPENED EVERY METHODIST CONFERENCE SINCE THE FIRST ONE. LIGHT COMES UP ON STAGE CENTER WHERE DR. COKE, FRANCIS ASBURY, JESSE LEE, PHILIP BRUCE AND BEVERLY ALLEN ARE SEATED AROUND A TABLE. THEY ARE SINGING HEARTILY AS THE DOOR OPENS. THE TALL POWERFUL FIGURE OF DR. JOHN KING ENTERS, SADDLEBAGS IN HAND. HE JOINS IN THE FINAL CHORUS. AS THE MUSIC DIES, DR. COKE WITHOUT SALUTATION CALLS ON KING TO DELIVER A PRAYER. DROPPING HIS SADDLEBAGS WHERE HE STANDS, KING BOWS HIS HEAD AND BEGINS TO PRAY.

KING: Dear Heavenly Father, we come together from all parts of this blessed land where we are engaged in thy holy service. We ask thy attendance...

AS KING PRAYS, HIS VOICE FADES. HE STANDS WITH ARMS RAISED OVER GROUP AS THE PIONEER STEPS TO STAGE FRONT TO ADDRESS THE AUDIENCE.

PIONEER: That's Dr. John King, a real educated man. He graduated from Oxford and some medical school over there.

They say he heard Mr. Wesley preach one day and was converted on the spot. His family was money folks. They didn't take to this new society. They up and chucked King out without a cent, and he come on over to America poor as me. That'd be about 1770. He said he was obliged to preach or be damned. At first even the Methodists didn't know how to take this fellow. Did he mean all he said? But he didn't give a mind. He'd jump on top of a blacksmith block or set up a table on a corner in Philadelphia or Baltimore and let 'em have it. Finally, they give him a circuit in Virginia, which in them days run over into North Carolina. In fact, he was the third Methodist preacher in this state. A couple years later he got hitched to his woman, and that done it. You cain't bread a woman, much less a passel of young'uns, on sixty-four dollars a year. That's all the church paid the preachers, when they paid them at all. Nothing to do but start doctoring again. He did and lived out his days not far from this house in Louisburg.

KING'S VOICE RISES AS HE CONCLUDES HIS PRAYER. CHORUS OF AMENS FROM MINISTERS. PIONEER STEPS BACK INTO SCENE, REMOVING THE DISHES FROM THE TABLE. KING MOVES ABOUT SHAKING HANDS WITH THE OTHERS PRESENT.

DR. COKE: Welcome, Brother King. We are delighted to have you in our midst, albeit a day late.

KING: I beg your pardon, Dr. Coke. A spring freshet washed away a crossing on my way, making a long detour necessary. I traveled twenty-four miles before I found a quiet spot where both my horse and I could cross safely.

ASBURY: This has happened to me many times, Brother King. We have just finished a bite to eat. Would you care for something to refresh you after your long ride?

KING: Thank you, Brother Asbury, but Mrs. Hill took care of me just before I came up. After fifty miles with little to eat but bread and water, I was sufficiently hungry to do well by her larder.

LEE: Methodist preachers are always hungry, leastways, that's our reputation.

BRUCE: We didn't help it none when we stopped at Brother Carruther's place last week, did we, Brother Lee?

LEE: I reckon we didn't. It was just eating time as we was passing by. A bunch of the neighbors had come in to help with spring planting, and the women folk had put a mess of good vittles on the table. They made us to eat first, and I suspect we was powerful hungry. When the others come up and looked over what was left, one bowed his head and prayed:

"O Lord, look down on us poor sinners.

The preachers is come and eat our dinners."

GENERAL LAUGHTER. PIONEER LAUGHS LOUDEST OF ALL. DR. COKE MOTIONS FOR HIM TO DESIST AND REMOVE KING'S SADDLEBAGS. AS THE PIONEER PREPARES TO LEAVE, COKE CALLS HIM BACK.

COKE: Perhaps you could bring us a refreshing drink, my good fellow. Would that be agreeable, gentlemen?

PIONEER: Glad to, your honor.

COKE: That was a fine story, Brother Lee. I feel obliged to note that the workers whom you deprived of a meal were at least free men, not bound to a master by the cruel bonds of slavery. This brings me to the chief issue confronting this conference. What can we do to help these poor souls in bondage?

ASBURY: Much needs to be done, I agree, Dr. Coke. They live in ignorance and sin, not knowing good from evil. They are hungry for instruction in the ways of the Lord.

COKE: I mean much more than that, Brother Asbury. At the conference at Lovely Lane last year, we voted to turn Methodists out of the conference if they bought or sold slaves.

STAGE LIGHTS DIM ON STAGE CENTER AS PIONEER APPEARS AT RIGHT. HE SPEAKS AS HE POLISHES GLASSES, OCCASIONALLY RUBBING A MOISTENED FINGER OVER A DIFFICULT SPOT.

PIONEER: I don't take much to that Dr. Coke, do you? He

was the first superintendent in America. That's what the major said. He sure can rub a fellow the wrong way. He was a preacher in the old church until he heard Mr. Wesley preach. Like the rest of 'em, he was bowled over too. He thinks he's heaps smarter than the rest of 'em around here. Now about slavery, he was hot against it like most of the preachers, but he didn't know how to softmouth folks about it. He'd get to preaching to rich planters, telling 'em it was a sin to have slaves, and dang there be the slaves a-setting up in the loft taking it all in. One uppity lady in South Carolina got so mad at him, she offered fifty pounds to anyone who'd horse-whip the doctor. He lit a shuck through the woods, and he never come back to them parts. He was a good man, but he just wasn't one of us.

SPOT FADES ON PIONEER. STAGE LIGHTS GO UP ON STAGE CENTER.

COKE: And for these reasons, I feel we must actively engage in a campaign for the emancipation of these poor black souls.

ASBURY: Dr. Coke, I beg to remind you that after we voted to bar slaveholders from the conference, we cancelled the action, considering it premature.

LEE: If we ain't careful, they won't be letting us at the slaves at all. Got to take it easy. Slavery is the way they live in these parts. You can't up and change it in a moment.

COKE: I'd like to know why not. The conference took an equally strong stand against strong liquor. I understand a jug of whiskey by the door is as much a part of hospitality in these parts as a warm fire, but because the people are accustomed to drink doesn't mean we are to join them.

PIONEER ENTERS WITH A JUG OF CORN WHISKEY AND SEVERAL GLASSES. AS THE MEANING OF DR. COKE'S WORDS PENETRATES, HE MAKES A HURRIED EXIT, DROPPING A GLASS. HE MAKES IT THROUGH THE DOOR WITH NO MISHAP AND THE JUG INTACT.

LEE: Indeed not, sir. It is up to us by example to put away the evil of strong drink.

ASBURY: This we are all doing, of course. In the instance of slavery, I must agree with Brother Lee. We must follow a more prudent and deliberate policy so as not to arouse antagonism.

STAGE LIGHTS DIM. THE PIONEER AT RIGHT WIPES BROW NERVOUSLY.

PIONEER: I got out of there hindside first. How was I to know Methodist preachers don't tipple? Some preachers do. I seen them. Glad Dr. Coke didn't sight me. He'd a-passed me off to Old Harry for sure. But that Preacher Lee, now ain't he something? He's my kind of folks. He weighs upward of two hundred and fifty, I reckon. He has to swap his horses every ten mile. He'd wear one down in a day. His paw was converted by a circuit rider in Virginia, and he must've been

right proud when Jesse came into the way of the Lord and started preaching. Right now Jesse's over on the Salisbury circuit, but when he hears the New England folks is in bad need of saving, he takes off for Massachusetts right away. He's just what them la-de-da folks in New England need. Like that fancy preacher who thought Jesse was too country to speak at his pulpit. He throwed some Greek words at Jesse, and Jesse, without batting a eye, throwed some Dutch back at him. He'd learned that down in North Carolina. That Preacher told his congregation that Jesse Lee was a l'arned man, he spoke Hebrew! Jesse was chaplain of the House of Representatives and the Senate up in Washington, and he wrote some books too. Some man, Jesse. Lee.

PIONEER FINISHES PULLING THE BUCKET FROM THE WELL. HE RETURNS WITH THE BUCKET TO THE CONFERENCE. LIGHTS UP ON STAGE CENTER.

COKE: I resent Brother Lee's attitude. I consider it impudent to the highest degree. I wonder whether your character is fit to represent our church.

ASBURY: Gentlemen, let us remember we are engaged in the Lord's work. We are too few to have friction among us.

COKE: What do you propose then, Brother Asbury?

ASBURY: Why not draw up a petition? Not asking for prohi-

bition of slavery. We know this cannot be at this time. Let us ask the legislature to pass an act letting slave-owners free their slaves if they want to. If we antagonize the owners by a stronger petition, we may be deprived of addressing our black flock.

ALLEN: That sounds fine to me. The law ain't fair to make a man keep his slaves if he's not a-wanting to.

COKE: Very well, such a petition it will be, although faint and spiritless. I will take it to every man in the conference and to General Washington himself.

ASBURY: I will gladly accompany you on your mission, Dr. Coke. And now, Brother Allen, I believe you have a report on the characters of the preachers. Are there any we should not license on your list?

ALLEN: Afraid there is, Superintendent Asbury. Most of 'em be of fine character, but there's always a coupla bad apples in a bushel of good ones.

COKE: We are in great need of more preachers. I'd like to hear your report.

ALLEN: One of them's William Fairchild. Don't know him myself, but they tell me he's always making proposals of marriage to the Sisters. In general, they say he's too fond

of the fair members of his congregation.

COKE: Let him marry then. A circuit rider's life is not for a married man.

ALLEN: James Appleby might be all right, but he preaches too long and prays too loud. He talks so fast, some folks can't understand what he says.

LEE: He ain't no nightingale singing neither.

ASBURY: Not a likely prospect.

ALLEN: There's one more, Caleb Thackston. He's proud and conceited and more pompous in the pulpit than a bishop.

ASBURY: Pride and conceit were the original sin of man and a Methodist preacher.

COKE: Your objections are well founded, Brother Allen.

ALLEN: With your permission, Dr. Coke, I would like our brethren to scrutinize the other characters we have passed. I'd like any comment they may have.

DR. COKE NODS AFFIRMATIVELY. BEVERLY ALLEN PROCEEDS TO DISTRIBUTE REPORT AMONG MINISTERS WHO LOOK THEM OVER DURING MONOLOGUE.

VOICE: It was a good year for Methodism.

It had seen nine hundred and ninety-one new members
brought into the fold.

The first presiding elders were appointed
To travel the territory and administer sacraments.
The circuit was extended to the pine-ringed borders
of Georgia.

It was to Georgia that Beverly Allen was sent
With all that great state for his circuit.
He had done mighty work in North Carolina.
He helped plant Methodism in the Cape Fear
And along the sandy banks of the Pee Dee.
He organized a society in Salisbury,
But once in Georgia he became
One of those "popular preachers"
Who find work everywhere else
Except where they are appointed,
Who promise much and come to naught.
He came to worse than naught.
He married rich,
Fell into sin,
Was expelled,
Went into business,
Failed, killed a marshall,
Fled to Logan County
(It was Rogue's Harbor then),

All this in less than a dozen years.

He is remembered:

The first apostate Methodist preacher.

JESSE LEE RISES, MOVING TO THE TABLE UPON WHICH HE PLACES A REPORT ON THE CHARACTER OF PREACHERS. HE PICKS UP A BOOK FROM THE TABLE BEFORE RETURNING TO HIS CHAIR.

LEE: They look all right to me, Brother Allen. We really be needing more preachers on the circuits. But right now, with your permission, Dr. Coke, I'd like to say a word about this book, Mr. Wesley's prayer book. It's a fine book for reading out of but not for praying.

BRUCE: That's right, Jesse. Any preacher worth his salt can pray better with his eyes shut than he can with 'em white-eyed open.

LEE: And while we be talking on it, I want to say I ain't for all that fancy gear some of us get decked out in when we go to preaching. The people distrust us when we're all trussed up.

ASBURY: Brother Lee, if I am not mistaken, you refer to my recent visit to Colonel Hendren's in Wilkes County. As I recall, you journeyed a full day to hear me preach. I regret my attire was so upsetting.

LEE: Now, Mr. Superintendent, I'd travel more than a day to hear you preach, but I ain't never seen you in all your

trappings. I just don't think the black gown and band stuff fits in with us, and I heard the people a-murmuring against it.

ASBURY: It is the custom for superintendents to wear cowl and cassock when making an address, whether it's in Wilkes County or in Philadelphia.

LEE: But that's just like the Old Church, sir. We shouldn't blame the people if they get mixed up and think you're one of them Anglicans.

ASBURY: If they listen as well as look, they'll know who I am.

ASBURY RISES, DELIBERATELY TURNS HIS CHAIR TO THE WALL, AND SITS ON THE REMAINDER OF THE SCENE WITH HIS BACK CONSPICUOUSLY TO THE CONFERENCE. PIONEER MOVES TO STAGE FRONT. LIGHT FADES ON CONFERENCE SCENE AS PIONEER SPEAKS.

PIONEER: That's Bishop Asbury, and he's got his nose out of joint again. Every time he didn't like something, he'd up and turn his back, just like he done now. But he didn't have to get so het up about fancy dress. Right after this meeting, the church done away with all of that, and the superintendents and the bishops wore just what everybody else did. I don't take much to this elder-deacon-bishop stuff. How come they had to give out titles? Just like the Old Church, if you

trappings. I just don't think the black gown and band stuff fits in with us, and I heard the people a-murmuring against it.

ASBURY: It is the custom for superintendents to wear cowl and cassock when making an address, whether it's in Wilkes County or in Philadelphia.

LEE: But that's just like the Old Church, sir. We shouldn't blame the people if they get mixed up and think you're one of them Anglicans.

ASBURY: If they listen as well as look, they'll know who I am.

ASBURY RISES, DELIBERATELY TURNS HIS CHAIR TO THE WALL, AND SITS ON THE REMAINDER OF THE SCENE WITH HIS BACK CONSPICUOUSLY TO THE CONFERENCE. PIONEER MOVES TO STAGE FRONT. LIGHT FADES ON CONFERENCE SCENE AS PIONEER SPEAKS.

PIONEER: That's Bishop Asbury, and he's got his nose out of joint again. Every time he didn't like something, he'd up and turn his back, just like he done now. But he didn't have to get so het up about fancy dress. Right after this meeting, the church done away with all of that, and the superintendents and the bishops wore just what everybody else did. I don't take much to this elder-deacon-bishop stuff. How come they had to give out titles? Just like the Old Church, if you

be asking me.

VOICE: Not like the Old Church.

The Methodists in America were like an Army,

An Army engaged in spiritual warfare.

The bishops, like Francis Asbury, were the generals.

The presiding elders were the captains.

The circuit riders were the soldiers of the line.

Not since the days of the Jesuit fathers

In the French Northwest has this country

Seen such promotion of Christian faith.

Not since the days of St. Francis

Has there been a religious type like the circuit rider.

Like the friars he had no place of abode.

A meagre salary of sixty-four dollars

Made poverty truly evangelical

And marriage impossible for the majority.

PIONEER AT STAGE RIGHT.

PIONEER: Yep, you got to take your hat off to them circuit riders, and look way up while you do. They went day in, day out, through all kinds of weather. If they didn't get to where they was headed by sundown, there sure as shooting wasn't no inn to put up at along the way. I recollect one time old Jessie Richardson traveled hard through snow one

whole day. He was still twelve mile from his preaching place when night come on. Jessie found a shack, but you know what, the blamed crittur inside wouldn't let Jessie in. There he sat singing hymns and praying in the snow. Finally the old coot cracked the door a little, eyed Jessie hard, and let him come by the fire. The next morning he sent him on his way with nary a bite to warm his empty belly and in eighteen inches of snow. Weather never stopped no preacher. "Nothing out today but crows and Methodist preachers," we used to say, and it was the Lord's truth. Sometime they had to put up with worse'n weather. Lots of high-placed folks looked down their nose at Methodists. Preachers like Jesse Lee could put them in their place. There was that time with the two lawyers.

SCENE: JESSE STROLLS ACROSS STAGE AS TWO WELL-DRESSED LAWYERS APPROACH WITH THE OBVIOUS INTENTION OF MAKING FUN OF MR. LEE.

FIRST LAWYER: Good morning, Mr. Lee. You are a preacher, I presume.

LEE: I pass for one, same as you pass for lawyers, I reckon.

SECOND LAWYER: Have you a liberal education?

LEE: I have enough to get over the country. Nothing to boast about.

FIRST LAWYER: You preach without notes, I understand?

LEE: Yes, preaching every day and riding a far piece don't leave much time for writing sermons. I wouldn't be reading 'em if I wrote 'em.

FIRST LAWYER: But are you not liable to make mistakes?

LEE: Oh yes, I often make mistakes.

SECOND LAWYER: But do you correct them as you proceed?

LEE: Now that depends on the mistake.

SECOND LAWYER: Elucidate, my good man.

LEE: It's this way. If the mistake be a bad one and liable to mislead the hearer, I correct it immediately. But if it be but a slip of the tongue and very near the truth, I let it go.

FIRST LAWYER: Is that so?

LEE: Like the other day, I was about to say, "The devil is a liar and the father of liars." By a slip of the tongue, I said, "The devil is a lawyer and the father of lawyers." The thing was so nearly correct, being in fact the truth, but only a little varying from what I would have said, that I passed right on, not thinking the mistake worth correcting.

FIRST LAWYER: Hmmp. I don't know whether you are more a knave or a fool.

LEE: Neither, I believe I am just between the two.

STAGE LIGHTS OFF ON STAGE CENTER. AUDITORIUM DARK.

VOICE: Into the midst of this moving civilization
Came the Methodist circuit-rider:
His commission was to preach
Every day in every week,
And the people flocked to the midday service -
Midday because time was the sun
And all could tell when it was high ahead.
What manner of man was this?
Educated? Only in the brush school,
The large circuits where the old broke in the young.
But he had a zeal and power of oratory
Peculiar to the Wesleyan movement,
And he had a burning that his message was of truth;
He went everywhere to proclaim it.
With a prophetic eye,
He saw the future doom of the soul
And Methodism its only salvation.
He would preach and pray, swear and cry,
Then mount his horse for another appointment.
He could not wait for churches.
Wherever he hitched his horse
And threw down his saddlebags,
The neighbors would follow a path to his door
And sit the long night by the open fire,
Listening to stories of the world beyond.
Politics and commerce, men and measure
Were his theme.

Before the night grew still,
 He drew forth his New Testament
 And explained to the simple woodsmen
 The still simpler story of salvation.
 The dense forest was his schoolroom.
 The Bible, the Discipline, and a hymnal were his
 library.

As John Bunyan in the Bedford jail
 Depicted hell and heaven
 And made them real,
 So he was inspired
 On lonely paths, by swollen streams.
 His words cut like a two-edged sword
 Into a God-hungry people.

FRANCIS ASBURY ASTRIDE HORSE COMES ON STAGE.

VOICE: Here he is.

Note the grave countenance,
 The straight-breasted coat,
 The oilskin covering on the Quaker hat,
 The leather saddlebags, the staid gait of the horse
 Which denoted the Methodist preacher.
 The greatest circuit rider of them all,
 Bishop Francis Asbury,
 Central figure in North Carolina Methodism
 For half a century!
 He beheld its origin.
 He labored to promote its growth.

He was the leader in its organization.
 Some say his labors exceeded those of Wesley himself.
 He delivered at least 16,425 sermons,
 Besides exhortations and lectures.
 He traveled on horseback,
 Over roadless country mostly,
 At least 275,000 miles. He attended
 At least two hundred and twenty-four annual conferences.
 He ordained more than four thousand ministers.
 Perhaps the history of Christianity
 For eighteen centuries can scarcely find a parallel.
 For all this his net gain:
 "Two old horses, the companions of my toil,
 We have walked six thousand, if not seven thousand,
 miles a year.
 When we have no ferryboat, they swim rivers."
 Following the example of Wesley,
 Asbury kept a journal,
 Begun on the ship which carried him to the New World,
 Never again to return to his native land.
 He continued until he could no longer move unaided,
 Until his pen fell from his faltering fingers
 At Granby, in South Carolina,
 Three months before his death.

LIGHTS UP ON CENTER STAGE ON THE INTERIOR OF A FRONTIER CABIN.
 A HOMEMADE BED IS FASTENED TO THE SIDE OF THE CABIN WALL. THE

MATTRESS OF STRAW RESTS ON SLATS. A SPLIT-BOTTOMED HICKORY CHAIR AND A HOMEMADE TABLE ARE THE ONLY OTHER FURNISHINGS. OILED PAPER SERVES AS A WINDOW GLASS. ASBURY RISES FROM THE BED, STRETCHES, THEN SCRATCHES HIS LEG. HE EXAMINES THE BED CLOSELY, SHAKING HIS HEAD RUEFULLY. A SETTLER ENTERS WITH A BASIN WHICH HE PLACES ON THE TABLE, THEN HE STEPS BACK TO WATCH ASBURY CURIOUSLY.

SETTLER: Morning, preacher. There be the pan of water you said you'd be wanting come morning.

ASBURY: Thank you, that is most kind of you. This will do nicely.

SETTLER: Hope the sleeping was all right last night. Some fleas come on us, and we can't seem to get shed of 'em.

ASBURY WASHES HIS FACE AS THE SETTLER WATCHES WITH INTEREST.

ASBURY: I'm getting accustomed to them better than I once did. Like Daniel in the lion's den, I pray for grace to endure their bite.

SETTLER: Preacher, you wash your face like that every morning?

ASBURY: Why yes, I do.

SETTLER: And you cut off your whiskers like that every morning?

ASBURY: That's right.

SETTLER: And you comb your hair like that every morning?

ASBURY: Yes, of course.

SETTLER: What a sight of trouble you must be to yourself!

SETTLER EXITS SHAKING HIS HEAD. AT THE DOORWAY HE TURNS.

SETTLER: Ma will be bringing you some vittles terrectly. She said you don't seem to like your taters fried in bear grease, so she's boiling you up some this morning.

ASBURY: Your wife is very kind.

AS SETTLER DEPARTS, HIS WIFE ENTERS SHYLY AND PUTS A PLATE OF FOOD ON THE TABLE.

WIFE: Morning, your honor.

ASBURY: Good morning to you, sister. And bless you. You've brought me a fresh egg for breakfast.

WIFE: The hen did us good last night. When I saw it first thing this morning, I said to myself, "Now that's for the good preacher's breakfast." I boiled you up some taters too.

ASBURY SEATS HIMSELF AT THE TABLE. THE SETTLER'S WIFE HOVERS NEARBY. SHE PICKS UP HIS COAT, FINGERING A LARGE RENT IN THE GARMENT.

WIFE: I spied this last night, and if you please, I'd be much obliged to mend it for you.

ASBURY: I would be most grateful. It caught on a thorny

bush in my path just yesterday.

WIFE: I sew a fine stitch. Pardon my bragging, sir, but my maw taught me.

ASBURY: It's a fine thing in a woman. I'm sure it would be far superior to what my awkward fingers could do.

WIFE: Aw, you wouldn't be a-sewing, sir. That be woman's work, a wife's work.

ASBURY: And if you have no wife?

WIFE: Aw, that be a shame. It must be a lonely life without no woman.

ASBURY: I guess it is, but there's been no time for marrying, even if I would ask a woman to share my life.

WIFE: I reckon you be doing right smart traveling.

ASBURY: More than six thousand miles a year, mostly over foot-paths in the forest.

WIFE: Land sakes. I can't even make it three hundred mile back home. Pa brung me out here going on ten year ago, and I ain't seen my maw since. She be a Methodist.

ASBURY: In North Carolina? Where does she live?

WIFE: Ain't far from Louisburg. My maw has entertained lots of you Methodist preachers. She'd be blushing all over to see the bed I give you last night.

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ASBURY: It was your own bed you offered. I was most grateful for a place to sleep.

WIFE: Nary a sheet on it. My maw now, it was her pride to have a well-made bed with pretty quilts and high bolsters. She had the whitest sheets in the whole county. But it be different out here.

ASBURY: You are wrong, good woman. You are as much a child of God in this hard wilderness as in Baltimore or Philadelphia.

WIFE: I wouldn't be believing it, nary a minute, if it weren't for you Methodists coming 'round telling us alla time. You bring your songs, and you bring your - hope.

ASBURY: I know life is hard. You said last night you lost your cow.

WIFE: Yep, old Smoocy up and died on us last week, all a sudden. That be how things go out here. Pa had a good crop of grain, but it be so far to market, he made it into corn. I don't mind the whiskey so much, but he ain't fit for work when he's a-boozing.

ASBURY: "Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink."

SETTLER'S SON ENTERS. HE REGARDS ASBURY IN AWE.

SON: Got your Nelly ready, preacher. I rubbed her down and give her the best we had to eat.

ASBURY: God bless you, boy. Nelly's a good horse. For four years we have followed appointments not even on the map, always

on time, always ready and willing.

SON: She be a fine animal.

ASBURY: She is that. If there's a future for animals, I shall be glad to meet my Nelly there.

SON: If she get too old to travel, I'd be beholden to you if you'd leave her back by here.

ASBURY: I'll remember your offer, son. Nelly might do worse than have a lad like you for master.

LIGHT FADES ON SETTLER'S CABIN. ASBURY WALKS TO STAGE LEFT.

ASBURY: This is a hard life. That poor woman has no easy time, but then, neither have I. I seldom know where my night's lodging will be, but the Lord provides. Last week I visited the Governor's home in Raleigh. Fortunately, I had recovered from a bad skin rash. I caught it some weeks ago in a mountain shack. It's a miracle I have not caught a rash twenty times over, considering the filthy cabins in which I pass many a night. My soul is at peace, but the burden of the Lord ever rests upon me. He prods me to be at work in his name. It's time we did something about the lack of education in this wilderness. Now that our ties with Mr. Wesley and England are severed, we have a greater need than ever for a publishing house. Where can we get the books for our ministers to distribute on their circuit? But again, where there is a need, the Lord provides a way. He will not fail us in this moment.

QUILTING BEE AT JOHN DICKINS' HOME. WORKING AT A QUILTING
FRAME ARE AGATHA DICKINS AND TWO NEIGHBOR WOMEN, MATTIE DRINK-
WATER AND ELIZA SNOOCH. ELIZA'S DAUGHTER, AMANDA LOU, IS
READING A BOOK.

MATTIE: Agatha Dickins, I've stood it long as I can. I just
must be knowing where on earth you got this fine piece of vel-
vet. It's soft as angel's skin.

AGATHA: Don't be fretting yourself, Mattie. Fetch me that
basket over by the sideboard, Mandy Lou. I might have a piece
to spare for that quilt you're a-making.

MATTIE: Agatha, you wouldn't dare! It'll be the making of
my tree-of-life. It was just lacking something. I still don't
recollect this, Agatha. Be it your dress?

ELIZA: You be the nosiest woman ever, Mattie Drinkwater. I
guess Agatha would be telling us if she be wanting us to know.

AGATHA: It's no secret. It was John's wedding suit nigh on
fifteen year ago. It wasn't worn real good, but he said he
never had a chance to wear it, being a Methodist preacher and
all. So I cut it up.

MANDY LOU: "By rule they eat, by rule they drink,
Do all things else by rule, but think.
Method alone must guide them all,
Whence Methodists themselves they call."

ELIZA: Mandy Lou, let me see that paper. Where on earth did you get such a poem?

MANDY LOU: The Peters boy give it to me at school. I thought it was laughable, but I should've knowed better. Nothing's funny if you be a Methodist.

ELIZA: Imagine saying such a thing, and right here in the preacher's own house.

AGATHA: I don't mind at all, Eliza. I'd heard that poem before. It ain't what you call bad, just saucy.

MATTIE: Mandy Lou ought to be whupped for some of the things she say.

MANDY LOU: It's no worse'n thinking 'em. Preacher Dickins say so. I just don't see why it be sinful to laugh and have fun.

ELIZA: We wasn't put on God's green earth to have fun, child.

MATTIE: Laughing and fun is the devil's work. It be easier to keep away from sin altogether.

MANDY LOU: I'd rather wash it away the way them Baptists do. They be a sight to behold, a-dunking at the river.

MATTIE: Baptists, hmmmph! They make so much ado about immersion, you'd think heaven was an island and the only way there to swim.

AGATHA: You shouldn't talk the Baptists down thataway.

ELIZA: My Tobias was a Baptist till I got a-holt of him.
Now he claim he can't even look at a jug of corn without me
being on him about it.

MATTIE: Sounds just like Ezekiel. His name may be Drinkwater,
he says, but he don't have to drink it all the time. It do seem
like the Methodists ought to make a place for a toddy in a man's
life.

AGATHA: There is a place. Bishop Asbury says its place is in
the cupboard under lock and key.

KNOCK IS HEARD ON FRONT DOOR. MAYBELLE LOCKLEAR RUSHES IN.

MAYBELLE: Good morning, ladies, and you too, Mandy Lou. I'm
sorry I'm so late.

AGATHA: Makes no nevermind. I saved you a place right here,
Maybelle.

MAYBELLE: I just ran jam-ke-dab into the presiding elder,
and what you think he told me?

ELIZA: Don't just talk. Tell us.

MAYBELLE: Best let Agatha tell us. It be her story.

AGATHA: Don't know what you mean, Maybelle. I got nothing
to tell, leastways not now.

MAYBELLE: Didn't your John get a big appointment at the con-
ference meeting last week?

AGATHA: Maybe he did, maybe he didn't. Ain't official yet.

MAYBELLE: Well, I hear he's going to be Book Steward.

ELIZA: Book Steward? What's that?

MAYBELLE: It's got to do with a Book Concern.

MATTIE: You do talk riddles. I never heard of it.

AGATHA: It's a publishing house, ladies. They'll print up books for folks to read.

MATTIE: Won't do no good. Nobody can read, leastways not many.

MAYBELLE: The Methodists are going to see about that too. They starting a school down on the Yadkin River.

AGATHA: I can tell you about the school. John drew up plans for it 'way back before the war.

MATTIE: I recollect that. Gabriel Long and Mr. Bustian give some money to it. I wondered what ever happened to it.

AGATHA: You know what things were like during the war. We could barely hold the church together, much less startba school. John's real proud they're going to have a school now. It will be the first conference school in the whole country.

MAYBELLE: And tell them about the magazine, Agatha.

AGATHA: I might as well, I guess. It's all part of the new job. John will edit a magazine for the church too.

ELIZA: I sure wasn't knowing John could write.

MAYBELLE: I reckon he can. He wrote up the Methodist Discipline, and lots better than what Mr. Wesley done.

AGATHA: He won't have much to write. Dr. Coke and Bishop Asbury aim to do most of the writing.

MATTIE: It must pleasure you, Agatha, to have a smart fellow like John Dickins for a husband.

MAYBELLE: He'll go somewheres one of these days. You just mark my words.

LIGHT FADES ON STAGE CENTER.

VOICE: The Book Concern was started on six hundred dollars
Loaned by John Dickins himself.

The first book published: a devotional book.

The Arminian Magazine, the Methodist Discipline,
Baxter's "Saint's Rest," and Wesley's "Primitive
Physic"

Completed the catalogue for the first year.

The Concern grew and prospered

Until destroyed by fire in 1836.

After the fire a public meeting was held

To raise money to rebuild the Concern.

At this meeting a well-dressed gentleman spoke.

There was little about him to indicate

He was born in a frontier cabin forty years before.

LIGHT ON CENTER STAGE. GENTLEMAN IS SPEAKING.

GENTLEMAN: I was born in the frontier country. I remember the time when the people in log cabins had no other books to read than such as they obtained from the Methodist circuit riders who carried them around in their saddlebags. After preaching, they would sell the books to the people. I remember the first visit of a circuit rider to our home. We sat around the fire until late in the night and listened to him talking of men and things familiar to him, things beyond the ken of our humble household. He brought to the poor people of the wilderness both the living word from the lips of God's messengers and reading material for their meditation when the living teacher had gone. Therefore, put me down for one thousand dollars to help rebuild the Methodist Book Concern.

SPOT FADES ON GENTLEMAN. SPOT ON PIONEER AT STAGE RIGHT.

PIONEER: One thousand dollars! That'd take care of fifteen and a half Methodist preachers for a year at the rate they was paid. That was a real fine gentleman there. Bet he can read good as my boy, but that ain't much nowadays, 'cause them Methodists is sure riding the circuit for reading, writing and religion. They're driving out the hobgoblins and witches and bringing in the ways of the Lord and English grammar. Take a man like Brantley York. He always was saying preaching and teaching go hand in hand, and he proved it. There's hardly a county in the state where he ain't preached and taught.

VOICE: Although the Reverend Brantley York was blind
Most of his eighty-six years,

Yet it is probable he organized more schools
Than any other man in America.

In the village and the backwoods,

In log cabins and churches,

In parlors and hotels,

On farms under God's bright sky,

He preached a while,

Then closed the Book and taught grammar.

From Morehead City to Asheville,

From Columbia to Danville,

This sightless man of God

Taught the blind to see the light

Of God and learning.

More than fifteen thousand heard his word.

Memorials remain:

Schools that grew from schools

Like Union Institute,

Which came to be called Duke University.

There were other men like Brantley York.

Today Greensboro College,

High Point College, Brevard, Pfeiffer,

And a host of others

Affirm their work and wisdom.

MUSIC: "ON JORDAN'S STORMY BANKS I STAND." LIGHT ON THE
PIONEER AT STAGE RIGHT.

PIONEER: Right after the Revolution the whole country was
hellbent on sinning. Sunday was a day for fox-hunting and

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horse-racing, card-playing and dancing. Then they started what they called camp meetings. I tell you, it was just like everybody went crazy over religion. Lots of folks say camp meetings got started right here in North Carolina. Daniel Asbury and John McKee had a big group together up in Lincoln County about 1790. Folks got so stirred up at that meeting, they built theirselves a church. They called it Rehoboth, and it was another first: first church west of the Catawba. Hard to say how come them camp meetings caught on so 'cept folks was lonely along this here frontier. Anybody a day's horseback away was counted your neighbors. Naturally, they had to come a fur piece for preaching, so they made the most of it. They'd load up their vittles and a mattress or two and come to stay a week. If some was not believing in the Lord, by the time they got in the crowd, they was gone for sure. Maybe it was the singing. They sure could sing. Maybe it was the way them Methodist preachers laid it on about leading a new life or going off to burn in hell fire forever. Whatever it be, it took holt like nothing you'd ever seen before, or since.

PIONEER WALKS TO STAGE CENTER INTO CAMP MEETING SCENE. THE PREACHER'S STAND AT STAGE RIGHT IS A RUDE ELEVATED PLATFORM. IN FRONT OF THE STAND IS AN ALTAR WITH STRAW STREWN ABOUT FOR A MOURNERS' BENCH. FACING THE STAND ARE ROWS OF SEATS, ACTUALLY ROUGH BOARDS LAID ACROSS TREE STUMPS. PINE TORCHES ATTACHED TO GIANT TREES SURROUNDING THE CLEARING ILLUMINE

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THE SCENE. PEOPLE ARE GATHERING FOR THE EVENING PREACHING.
AS THE PIONEER WALKS TO ONE OF THE SEATS, TWO WOMEN APPROACH
FROM THE OPPOSITE SIDES OF THE STAGE, SEE EACH OTHER AND HUR-
RY TO EMBRACE.

MAGGIE MEACHAM: As I live and take a breath, it's Lina Vasey.

LINA VASEY: Maggie Meacham! You're a sight for sore eyes.

MAGGIE: Where be that pretty little girl of your'n? I ain't
seen Lillybud since she was a knee baby.

LINA: She be around somewheres. You wouldn't be knowing
her. She's right in the rise of her bloom. But land sakes,
what be you doing here? Cousin Lulu say she seen you over
at a meeting at Reedy Fork just a fortnight ago.

MAGGIE: That be right. I seen Lulu. I go to all the camp
meetings my horse can take me to. I likes 'em. Folks is so
friendly-like.

LINA: I don't see how you do it. You always have a wagon-
load of vittles to hand out too.

MAGGIE: Ain't nothing to me. These poor preachers got to
eat, so I aim to see that they do. Not much trouble to me.
Like when I got home from Reedy Fork, I kilt me a mutton,
cooked five of my best salt-cured hams, baked a dozen loaves
of bread, and here I be.

LINA: If you had a family to take care of, you wouldn't
have time for all that doing. You need a husband to be

settling down.

MAGGIE: I ain't ag'in' it, but I figure if the good Lord be wanting me to have one, He'll provide.

LINA: Hush your mouth, Maggie. Oh, here comes Preacher Edney a-looking hard at us. We best be singing. Here, let's set.

PREACHER SAMUEL EDNEY MOUNTS THE PLATFORM. HE HOLDS UP A TUNING FORK TO FIND A PITCH. THE CONGREGATION GROWS STILL. EDNEY BEGINS "HOW TEDIOUS AND TASTELESS THE HOURS" AS CONGREGATION JOINS IN CHORUS.

EDNEY: Amen, brothers and sisters, amen. Last night beneath the light of these same torches, we had forty-seven converted and nineteen fully sanctified. It was a glorious record for our Lord. Some of them was city slickers. Some was pineywoods sinners. The Lord harkened to all, just like He'll be harkening to you if you speak at Him this night. So you with trouble in your heart, you with burdens on your soul, come forward. Leave your troubles behind. Place your burdens on the lap of God.

VOICE CRIES FROM OFFSTAGE. TOMMY SIMPSON RUNS ONSTAGE.

TOMMY SIMPSON: Help me, preacher. I'm in bad need of saving. I been out there a-cavorting with sinners.

EDNEY: Repent, brother, and let Him wash away your sins.

GROUP: Repent your sins. Repent your sins.

TOMMY: I just come away from one of them whiskey houses down

the road. I was a-playing cards and a-blaspheming when I^{45.}
got struck sick-like all over. It was like the Lord was
a-pulling at me to come away from that wicked place.

EDNEY: The Lord was a-calling you back to the fold, brother.

TOMMY: I quit that place, preacher. I done come on my knees
afore the Lord, begging His blessed forgiveness.

EDNEY: Lo, there is joy in heaven over one sinner repenteth.
Recollect you the Scriptures and the Shepherd and the nine-
ty-nine sheep. He left them all to seek one stray lamb.

GROUP: Amen, amen.

EDNEY: Thank the Lord. I am washed in the blood of the Lamb.

GROUP: Washed in the blood of the Lamb.

EDNEY: Let's all bow our heads and thank the Lord in prayer.
Oh Lord, we have happiness in our hearts tonight. There was
a sinner in our midst, but he sees the light and now he's a
lamb in Thy fold. But Lord, my soul is pained somehow by the
way some of these good women is all got up in fancy dress like
they going to a dancing place. Some got finger rings and ear-
rings and shawls with fringe about. Pity these, Lord. Help
them to recollect the words of good St. Paul as to how women
ought to dress theirselves with good works, not costly array,
in order to open wide them gates of heaven.

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AS PREACHER EDNEY PRAYS, THE WOMEN SELF-CONSCIOUSLY REMOVE
ALL JEWELRY AND FRILLS THAT MIGHT CATCH THE PREACHER'S EYE.

EDNEY: Oh Lord, lift our burden with thy pierced and bleeding
hand.

GROUP: Thy pierced and bleeding hand.

EDNEY: We know who will lead us from the darkness of the
night, from the valley of the shadow.

REUBEN PEDICORD: From the fire of the devil.

EDNEY: Though our sins be as scarlet, He will wash them
white as snow.

GROUP: Wash them white as snow.

REUBEN PEDICORD RISES FROM HIS SEAT AND MAKES HIS WAY TO
THE ALTAR WHERE HE KNEELS WITH BOWED HEAD.

EDNEY: Blessings on you, Reuben Pedicord. Rise up and speak
out so our brothers and sisters can hear you.

REUBEN: Thank you, preacher. I just be wanting all these
folks to know what a wonderful feeling I got since last night.

EDNEY: Brother Pedicord was one of the nineteen who was fully
sanctified last night. We'd be obliged if you'd speak us a
piece.

REUBEN: I ain't much for talking, but I'd like you to know
as to how it was with me last night. For a long time I been

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sinning. I'd hear the preacher say, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you'll be saved." I heared them words over and over again, but I ain't paid them no mind. What do they mean, I'd ask myself. I know I be a sinner. We all be sinners. We was born in sin. But the preacher kept a-talking. "Have faith in the Lord," he'd say. That just be preacher talk, I'd say. But last night it come on me different-like. Christ loves me. He loves us every one. But he loves me.

GROUP: Christ loves us every one. Christ loves us every one.

REUBEN: But is it true? Do he really love the likes of me? You all be knowing the sot I am. But He give himself up to be killed on the cross for me. Me that drinks that filthy booze every day in the year. Me that's not been in a church since I was a little nipper. It was as though I seen the Holy Ghost a-telling me it was the truth. I come out in front of all you last night, knowing the sinner I be, aiming to sin no more. Christ died for me and you and every blessed one of us.

GROUP: Christ died for us. Christ died for us.

EDNEY: Let's all rejoice with Brother Pedicord. Let's sing a joyous hymn for his salvation.

MUSIC: "O HAPPY DAY." GROUP STARTS SINGING WITH GUSTO. SOME CLAP THEIR HANDS. SOME JERK THEIR HEAD. OTHERS TWITCH INVOLUNTARILY. A BOY AND GIRL RISE AND START DANCING IN A

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CIRCLE, KEEPING TIME TO THE MUSIC. THEY GRAVITATE TOGETHER, DANCING ALONG THE WAY. PREACHER EDNEY SEES THEM AND HOLDS HIS ARMS WIDE TO STOP THE SINGING.

EDNEY: Hold it, hold it right there. What you think you be a-doing, Roger? And you, Lilybud Vasey?

ROGER: We felt the exercise to start dancing, preacher.

EDNEY: Dancing ain't no fit exercise, boy.

ROGER: Don't see why it ain't. It's fitting for that old man over there. (HE POINTS TO ELDERLY MAN WHO IS JERKING HIS HEAD SPASMODICALLY) He's a-jerking same as we only he's a-setting.

EDNEY: It be different when you're a-setting. Dancing while you be standing is the devil's own work. (TURNS TO LILYBUD) Do you want him to take your soul to burn in hell forever, Lilybud?

LILYBUD: No, never, Preacher Edney. It's just that music seemed to take a-holt.

EDNEY: Don't let nothing like that happen again, Lilybud, and you too, Roger. We better soothe our souls with a soft hymn. Let's try, "No, Never Alone."

MUSIC: "NO, NEVER ALONE." AFTER SEVERAL STANZAS, MAGGIE MEACHAM STANDS UP.

MAGGIE: Stop a-singing. I got a joyous message, everybody.

GROUP: Hear,hear. She got a message.

MAGGIE: It's a-telling me I ain't going to be alone no more.
I'm a-going to have a husband.

GROUP: She ain't alone no more.

MAGGIE: It say I got a man. That man be Reuben Pedicord
right over there.

REUBEN: I ain't got no message, Maggie. Nobody come a-talking
at me about it.

MAGGIE: I got the message. That's what counts. It say you
going to marry up with me tonight.

REUBEN: But it ain't fitting. Nobody told me nothing.

MAGGIE: The Holy Ghost know. He tell me if you don't marry
up with me, you going to burn always and always, Reuben.

REUBEN: But I got to be sure about this, folks. The Lord
wouldn't do nothing like that to me now.

EDNEY: Let's all sing, and see what the Lord tell us. He
speak in a mighty voice, so sing and listen at the Lord.

MUSIC: "BLOW YE THE TRUMPET." LIGHT FADES AND MUSIC DIES
AS THE PIONEER STEPS UP TO STAGE FRONT TO ADDRESS THE AUD-
IENCE.

PIONEER: They been meeting and singing and praying since
the trumpet blowed this morning, and they ain't even started

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good yet. A little later the folks get all exercised up like that old man, some exhorting, some praying, and some just lying on the ground like they was dead. Some time a crazy woman get a notion she going to marry up with somebody, like that Maggie Meacham, but that don't happen much with the Methodists. Won't say the Methodists was popular with everybody. That man in the corner there use to put mustard plasters on his wife to cure her of Methodism. It didn't do no good. He finally joined up with the rest. The Methodists was rolling down the long road, and nobody, not nobody could stop them now.

MUSIC UP AS VOICES ARE RAISED IN THE FINAL STANZA OF "BLOW YE THE TRUMPET." MUSIC FADES AS STAGE DARKENS.

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ACT II

MUSIC: "JESUS, LOVER OF MY SOUL."

VOICE: Camp meeting - a sacred term for Methodists.
In wide and sunny glades they met,
By the copper-colored trunks of ancient trees;
They set revival fires to burning
From the Blue Ridge to the sea.
The groans of the penitent pleading pardon
Mingled with shouts of the sinners saved.
Peace emanated through the pines,
Standing as straight as candles,
Their boughs blessing the earth with sweet shade,
Their crowns blazing like emerald flames in the
sunlight.
In the warmth of the crowd, elbow against elbow,
Thousands found new courage to face the raw life.
It was a happy season
Belonging only to the church's early days.
A child of accident, the camp meeting became
The strong arm of Methodism for a century.

PIONEER: By the time we was into the 1800's, Methodism was
a-spreading like a prairie fire. Don't know exactly why it
seemed to catch on more than others, except them circuit
riders was everywhere.

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PIONEER WALKS TO CENTER STAGE WHERE HE BEGINS TO UNLOAD
A WAGON OF HOUSEHOLD GOODS. A METHODIST PREACHER ENTERS.
THE PIONEER STARES IN DISBELIEF.

PIONEER: Not a Methodist preacher out here!

PREACHER: Welcome, brother, and the Lord's blessing on you.

PIONEER: Now lookahere, preacher, I left Virginia for North Carolina to get shed of you'uns, and you come along right after me. So I come on up in these mountains, and here you come at me again. You done got my two girls and my old woman. Ain't that enough for the Methodists?

PIONEER: Nothing is enough until we have spread God's message to all men everywhere.

PIONEER: I got work to do. I ain't even unloaded my wagon. But you Methodists beat all the way you be everywhere at once.

PREACHER: That's about right, friend. If you go to heaven, you'll find our preachers there. If you go the other way, there's some there too. And you already seen how it be on earth. Don't you think you best be coming to terms with us, brother, so you can be at peace?

PIONEER WALKS TO STAGE RIGHT SHAKING HIS HEAD. LIGHT FADES ON STAGE CENTER WITH A SINGLE SPOT REMAINING ON THE PIONEER AT RIGHT.

PIONEER: Them Methodists was everywhere all right, and some of them was starting to think. They wasn't used to thinking,

and they had to take it slow-like. They remembered that 53.
word "representation" they'd learned a while back when they
was a-fighting with the British. It seemed to some Methodists
that they didn't have none of it, that just a few folks was
bossing the whole church. They kept jawing about it at every
conference, but nobody done nothing. This riled them worse
than ever. About the time we put old Andy Jackson in the White
House, a hunk of the membership pulled out of the Methodist
Episcopal Church and set theirselves up as the Methodist
Protestant Church. There was lots of folks in North Carolina
what felt the same way, and every time a bunch of Methodists
would get together, it'd come up sure as sunrise.

MUSIC: "A CHARGE TO KEEP I HAVE." LIGHT GO UP ON STAGE
CENTER WHERE TWELVE MEN AND WOMEN ARE SEATED IN A CIRCLE.
IN THE CENTER IS A TABLE WITH THE LEADER'S BIBLE. AFTER
SINGING A HYMN, THEY BOW THEIR HEADS AS THE LEADER PRAYS.

LEADER: Oh Lord, we come together for our weekly class meet-
ing tonight. As we lift our hearts in prayer, we hope Thy
loving spirit will shine upon us. Help us to inspire each
other to new heights of pure living in the grace of our
Heavenly Father. Amen.

LEADER: You showed some fine singing this evening to put
us all into the spirit. How about you starting us off now,
Brother O'Malley. How has your soul fared this past week?

O'MALLEY: The Lord been with me - some of the time.

LEADER: But not all the time?

O'MALLEY: No, not all the time.

LEADER: Your temper be troubling you again?

O'MALLEY: You might say so and be right about it.

LEADER: But you keep a-wrestling with it?

O'MALLEY: I keeps a-wrestling.

LEADER: Good for you, Brother O'Malley. Go on as you are,
and one glorious day you will inherit the crown incorruptible.

O'MALLEY: I'll keep a-trying. That I will.

GROUP: Amen, amen.

LEADER: Sister Cheek, has the Lord been your support this
week?

SISTER CHEEK: That he has, every sweet moment of every day.
I bask in the glorious sun of his blessing all my waking hours,
and when I sleep, the angels in heaven shine their grace upon
my pillow. The Lord is my constant portion by day and by night.
Life is a song and a way to glory since I come into the way of
the Lord.

GROUP: Hallelujah, she is blessed.

LEADER: This week has been a complete spiritual triumph. Is
that right, sister?

SISTER CHEEK: That's right, every minute.

LEADER: What a blessing you must be to your husband!

A SILENCE FALLS ON THE CIRCLE. SOME SMIRK, OTHERS LOOK DOWN.

SISTER CHEEK FINGERS HER KNITTING BAG NERVOUSLY.

LEADER: Sister Cheek, don't your husband rejoice in your happiness with you?

SISTER CHEEK: That good-for-nothing varmint! You know what he done? I was a-singing a hymn at the top of my lungs the other night, and he come in all boozed up and evil-smelling. He start to laughing at me, he did. Ain't nobody going to laugh at me and get by with it. I give him the top of my mop, and he ain't been back around since.

LEADER: Then all has not been a pure blessing after all?

SISTER CHEEK: Not if you count that no-good husband of mine.

LEADER: It's time to hear from Brother Whitaker now. How be you a-faring?

WHITAKER: I have had little peace of mind, I must say.

LEADER: You haven't been in the way of temptation?

WHITAKER: In a way, you might say so. It's about the Church and the way they done Preacher Hill.

SISTER WALKER: I'm happy to hear someone speak out. I feel the same way about them throwing the preacher clean out of the

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Church. Good man that he be too.

WHITAKER: Thank you, Sister Walker, but the thing that hurts most of all is the way they done it. He didn't have but two days notice afore they tried him.

O'MALLEY: That ain't democratic.

WHITAKER: 'Course it ain't, but that's what the Church got het up about. Preacher Hill kept a-saying we ought to have more democracy in the church government.

SISTER WALKER: If Preacher Hill say so, it must be right. He wouldn't go to look for trouble.

WHITAKER: You know what they done up in Baltimore last May? A bunch of folks who felt like he does just up and pulled out of the Church. They set up another Methodist Church.

LEADER: Don't be moving so fast, Brother Whitaker. That's a big step. You ought to think on it a long time.

SISTER CHEEK: I think so too. Methodist is Methodist to me.

WHITAKER: Reckon you like the bishop a-telling you what to do, and you got no say.

SISTER CHEEK: Ain't nobody telling me what to do without my having a say.

LEADER: How about our meeting on it? That's the thing to do. A class meeting ain't a fitting place to settle stuff like that.

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WHITAKER: I'll get a hold of Preacher Hill and set up a meeting. Any of you wanting to come is welcome. Methodists is Methodists, and we can be one kind as well as another.

LIGHT FADES ON CLASS MEETING SCENE. A SINGLE SPOT IS ON THE PIONEER AT STAGE RIGHT.

PIONEER: They had their first meeting at Sampson Meeting House in Halifax County. They was just eleven to begin with, but it didn't take them long to grow. These was solid folks a-rising against the church. Take Eli Whitaker. His grandpaw was one of the first to settle in these parts. There was a chapel his grandpaw built. The Methodist Episcopal Church used it until all this happened. Then it was the first Methodist Protestant Church in North Carolina. It was right here they had the first North Carolina Conference. That be the oldest conference in the whole church. There go another passel of firsts, don't it? So the church which was one is now two. That's what comes a-thinking and a-learning what's in books. A lot of folks was learning now. Take that little nipper of mine. He can read writing and spell out in five syllables. He's extra smart. At end of first term he was acting out a part in a dialogue. When he got so's he could read the New Testament, they put him in writing. Nobody gets into writing less he can read the Bible real good. He go to Sunday School every Sunday of the world. They teach them to mind at the Methodist Sunday School, I can tell you.

A TEACHER SITS SURROUNDED BY HALF A DOZEN PUPILS SEATED ON

WOODEN BENCHES. THE TEACHER LINES OUT THE REGULATIONS TO WHICH CHILDREN RESPOND. 58.

TEACHER: I must always mind the Superintendent and all the teachers of this school.

CHILDREN: I must always mind the Superintendent and all the teachers of this school.

TEACHER: I must go to my seat as soon as I go in.

CHILDREN: I must go to my seat as soon as I go in.

TEACHER: I must not leave my seat until school is out.

CHILDREN: I must not leave my seat until school is out.

TEACHER: I must take good care of my book.

CHILDREN: I must take good care of my book.

TEACHER: I must not lean on the one who sits next to me.

CHILDREN: I must not lean on the one who sits next to me.

TEACHER: I must walk softly in school and not make a noise by the church door.

CHILDREN: I must walk softly in school and not make a noise by the church door

TEACHER: I must always behave well in the road going to and from school.

CHILDREN: I must always behave well in the road going to

and from school.

TEACHER: I must walk softly in church.

CHILDREN: I must walk softly in church.

TEACHER: I must go away from church as soon as service is ended.

CHILDREN: I must go away from church as soon as service is ended.

LIGHT FADES ON CENTER STAGE. PIONEER APPEARS AT STAGE RIGHT.

PIONEER: The Bible was the only learning book in them days. It was a primer and a spelling book all at once. Memorizing the Scripture was a big part of the lesson. My boy had to learn seven verses by heart for each lesson. It'd a-killed me if I'd a-had to learn seven verses of anything in my head.

LIGHT FADES ON PIONEER.

VOICE: In the beginning Methodism was one,
One Army of the living God,
Christianity seeking and saving the lost.
The North had an equal part with the South.
There were African slaves in all the colonies
Until climate and cotton, rice and sugar
Made an historical change.
Slavery was unprofitable in the North
So the best people arrayed themselves against it.
The black man, singing his sad songs,
Moved South and remained,
And here the best people arrayed themselves for it.

The Methodist Church sat square between.
When kind masters purchased slaves from cruel traders,
It seemed almost liberation.
Yet how could a church condone
The buying and selling of bodies and souls?
But to ban slaveholders from the church
Would, in effect, ban the church from the South.
"Shall we shut the door and keep it out,
Or let it in and see if we can get it out again?"
With a tone of increasing moderation,
The Compromise Law was passed.

A MAN IN A BLACK SUIT READS A PROCLAMATION AT STAGE LEFT.

READER: "In the South and West civil authorities render emancipation impracticable. They beg leave to submit the following resolution: "Resolved that no slaveholder shall be eligible to any official station in our church where the laws of the state in which he lives will admit of emancipation and permit the liberated slave to enjoy freedom."

LIGHT FADES ON MAN READING THE PROCLAMATION.

VOICE: Each General Conference leaned toward concession
To Southern views and sentiments until 1844.
The abolition wing of the church could stand no more.

WOMAN'S VOICE: Slavery is a sin.

MAN'S VOICE: The Methodist Church is responsible for slavery
in its pale.

VOICE: The crisis was approaching.
The demand of one side, the concessions of the other
Made the rift wider than ever.
An enforced and irritating union
Is incomparably worse than a friendly separation.
There were forebodings before that conference
In New York City in the flowery month of May.
The leaders were great men.
They knew in their secret heart
There could be no permanent pacification.
The differences were too deep to be healed.
So Bishop James O. Andrew of Georgia,
A slaveholding bishop only technically speaking,
Became the rock on which the church was split.
Bishop Andrew became a symbol
For a cause lost long before.
Let Bishop Andrew speak for himself.

BISHOP ANDREW APPEARS AT ROSTRUM AT STAGE RIGHT.

BISHOP ANDREW: Several years ago an old lady bequeathed to me a girl in trust to be taken care of until she was nineteen years of age. Then with her consent she was to be sent to Liberia, or in the case of her refusal to go, she was to be made as free as the laws of Georgia would permit. She refused to go to Liberia. I derived no pecuniary advantage from her, and she was at liberty to go to a free state at her pleasure, but the laws of Georgia would not permit me to emancipate her

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in our state. I am therefore a slaveholder without consent.

WOMAN'S VOICE: But how about the negro boy? You got a boy too, don't you?

BISHOP ANDREW: I have a boy. The mother of my first wife left to her a negro boy. My wife died without a will, and by the laws of the state of Georgia, the negro boy became my property. But emancipation, as in the case of the negro girl, was impracticable. The boy is free to leave the state whenever he can provide for himself or find others to provide for him.

MAN'S VOICE: But how about all those slaves your wife has?

BISHOP ANDREW: A few months ago I married a lady possessed of slaves. Shortly after our marriage, being unwilling to become the slaves' owner myself, I secured them to her by a deed of trust. Consequently, I disclaim any legal responsibility but declare my wife is unable to emancipate the slaves even if she desired to do so.

READER: Bishop Andrew wished to resign, but it was not that easy. As he wrote his daughter from New York during the conference...

MRS. ANDREW IS SEATED AT A TABLE KNITTING AS BISHOP ANDREW'S DAUGHTER READS A LETTER.

DAUGHTER: "...and as to the General Conference, thus far it has done little else but quarrel. Some of them are in great trouble about having a slaveholding bishop, and I should

greatly relieve them if I should resign. I would most joy-^{63.}
fully resign, if I did not dread the influences on the South-
ern church. I shall therefore wait patiently a little longer.
The clouds are dark, but God is in the whirlwind and guides
the storm."

READER: A delegation from the twelve slaveholding states
met. They addressed these words to the General Conference
on the subject of their bishop: " As the Methodist Episcopal
Church is now organized, and according to its organization
since 1784, a bishop is not a mere creature of the General
Conference. The General Conference as such cannot constitute
a bishop. It is true, the annual conferences select the bish-
ops of the church by suffrage of the delegates, but the General
Conference does not possess the power of ordination without
which a bishop cannot be constituted. The power to appoint
does not necessarily involve the power to remove, and when
the appointing power is derivative, as in the case of the
General Conference, the power of removal does not accrue at
all."

LIGHT ON CENTER STAGE REVEALS MRS. ANDREW READING A LETTER
TO BISHOP ANDREW'S DAUGHTER.

MRS. ANDREW: "The entire delegation from the twelve slave-
holding conferences has met and through a committee have
earnestly protested against my resignation under any circum-
stances as inevitably destructive to the Southern Church; and
for the sake of that church I am resolved to maintain my pos-
ition and await the issue. O my own dear sweet home! The

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sweetest spot on this green earth. How gladly would I spend
the rest of my life in your society. But we must trust God
and obey him."

VOICE: The southern delegation was not for slavery.
They saw, felt, acknowledged its evil curse,
But they thought it was the only way
To teach both slave-owners and slaves,
Much as Paul made no interference
With slavery in his day and time,
Knowing it would turn society against his Gospel.
So the southern delegation in deep sorrow,
Led by stern Bishop Joshua Soule
Went home to form a new church.
For the next sixteen years the Northern Church
cursed slavery
And barred the black man from its midst.
For sixteen years the Southern Church accepted
slavery
But spent its men and money to bring the black
man to the fold.

MUSIC: "BATTLE HYMN OF THE REPUBLIC." LIGHTS UP AS WOUNDED
SOLDIERS ARE BROUGHT IN ON STRETCHERS. A DOCTOR TENDS ONE
AS A METHODIST MINISTER PRAYS OVER ONE OF THE DYING.

VOICE: The storm of war began, the long tempest
Which would not abate till the country fell to pieces.
It seems a miracle the Southern Church survived at all.

They had built schools and colleges:

Now professors were called from the halls of learning
And preachers from the pulpit.

Churches were burned or dismantled for use
As stables, warehouses, hospitals.

The ghastly devastation in the trail
Of invading armies,

The horrors of two thousand battles,

The agonizing anxieties,

These were North Carolina's portion

And the portion of the South

Through four long and sorrowful years.

The Southern Methodist Church

Filled appointments, preached, prayed,

Exhorted, held conferences when able,

And many of its ministers served as chaplains.

LIGHT ON ABRAHAM LINCOLN AT STAGE RIGHT.

LINCOLN: It is no fault in others that the Methodist Church
sends more soldiers to the field, more nurses to the hospital
and more prayers to heaven than any. God bless the Methodist
Church, bless all churches, and blessed be the God who, in
this our great trial, giveth us the churches.

VOICE: On April twenty-six General Johnston surrendered.
The South was conquered, the war was ended.
Soldiers returned to the desolation and destitution

that was home.

The Southern Church shared all disasters,
But whatever banners had fallen, or been furled,
That of Southern Methodism still survived.

PIONEER, DRESSED IN A LOUD SPORTS JACKET, APPEARS AT STAGE
RIGHT.

PIONEER: Times was sure changing. Got railroads and radios,
cars and Coca Colas, telephones and airplanes. The Methodists
ain't changed much. They sort of like three rivers, all going
in the same direction, but they ain't got together yet. First,
there's the Methodist Episcopal Church. That's the one that
met at Major Hill's house in Louisburg. Of course, it ain't
no more. What it was is split up into Methodist Episcopal
Church South and North, so that makes two. Then there's the
Methodist Protestant Church, the one Eli Whitaker helped to
get started. All three of them was prospering in North Car-
olina, some more than others, but they all had a hankering
to get back together.

VOICE: "Healing is a matter of time,
But it is also sometimes a matter of opportunity."
The Protestant Methodists,
The Southern Methodists,
The Northern Methodists
Were all one in theology
Yet not in plan.
But the union of Methodism was on the march.

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In 1898 work began on one hymnal, one catechism,
one order of worship.

Then came agreement in the mission field

That Methodists would not overlap.

Fraternal messengers were exchanged.

At last union was achieved.

What had been three became one

At the uniting conference of the Methodist Church

In Kansas City in May, 1939.

Five months later in Greensboro,

They held a uniting conference for North Carolina.

Each separate conference had a separate session,

Then, to unite all, all met together.

The Methodist Protestant Church

Convened first, at Grace Methodist Church,

At ten o'clock in the morning.

Bishop James H. Straughn presided.

LIGHT ON BISHOP STRAUGHN AT STAGE CENTER.

BISHOP STRAUGHN: As we meet, we are deeply conscious that this is our last and that soon we are to enter into a new relationship that will enable us to do greater things than we have done as a separate denomination. I am thankful that the Methodist Protestant Church and the North Carolina Conference existed. This conference has been dear to us, but now we go to a greater destiny as The Methodist Church of the United States of America.

LIGHT FADES ON BISHOP STRAUGHN.

VOICE: The Methodist Protestant Church
Contributed seventy-four ministers
And 22,361 church members.
The next conference to convene:
The fiftieth session of the Western North Carolina
Conference
Of the Methodist Episcopal Church South
At West Market Street Methodist Church
At nine o'clock the next morning.
Bishop Clare Purcell presided.

LIGHT ON BISHOP PURCELL AT STAGE CENTER.

BISHOP PURCELL: Whereas the Methodist Episcopal Church
South has by proper constitutional process adopted the "Plan
of Union" and has united with the Methodist Episcopal Church
and the Methodist Protestant Church, and the unit conference
of delegates of the three churches has met and has adopted
the "Declaration of Union," declaring that the three churches
are and shall be one church, the Western North Carolina
Conference as a conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church
South is hereby adjourned sine die.

LIGHT FADES ON BISHOP PURCELL.

VOICE: The Methodist Episcopal Church South
Contributed three hundred and seventy-seven
ministers
And 167,028 church members to the new conference.

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One half hour later at Centenary Methodist Church
The sixty-second session of the Blue Ridge-Atlantic
Conference
Of the Methodist Episcopal Church convened.
Bishop Wallace Brown presided.

LIGHT ON BISHOP BROWN AT STAGE CENTER.

BISHOP BROWN: The secretary will now read a legal document
declaring that the Western North Carolina Conference and the
North Carolina Conference of the Methodist Church are legal
successors of the Blue Ridge-Atlantic Conference in directing
every spiritual interest and every property interest formerly
under the control of the Blue Ridge-Atlantic Conference.
This will be followed by a vote of the assembled delegates.

LIGHT FADES ON BISHOP BROWN.

VOICE: There were fifty-eight delegates present,
And fifty-eight voted in favor of the document.
The Blue Ridge-Atlantic Conference added thirty-
nine ministers
And 11,901 church members to the conference.
The next day all of the conferences met
At West Market Street Methodist Church
To make North Carolina Methodism one body
With four hundred and ninety ministers
And 201,290 members.

MUSIC: "THE CHURCH'S ONE FOUNDATION." CHOIR SINGS SEVERAL
STANZAS IN A DARKENED AUDITORIUM. LIGHTS UP ON CENTER STAGE

70.
REVEAL A CONGREGATION SINGING. THREE BISHOPS STAND AT STAGE
CENTER. AS MUSIC FADES, THE THREE MEN SPEAK THE FOLLOWING
PASSAGES IN UNISON. LIGHTS GO ON IN MAIN AUDITORIUM SO THAT
THE CONGREGATION MAY JOIN IN WITH THE CONGREGATION ON STAGE
IN RESPONDING.

BISHOPS: Now therefore, we, the members of the Uniting Session
of these annual conferences, the legal and authorized represent-
atives of The Methodist Episcopal Church, The Methodist Episcopal
Church South and The Methodist Protestant Church, in confer-
ence here assembled on this twentieth day of October, 1939,
do solemnly in the presence of God and before all the world
make and publish the following Declarations of fact and prin-
ciple. The Methodist Episcopal Church, The Methodist Episcopal
Church South and The Methodist Protestant Church are and shall
be one United Church.

THE CONGREGATION: We do so declare.

BISHOPS: The Plan of Union as adopted is and shall be the
Constitution of this United Church and its three constituent
bodies.

THE CONGREGATION: We do so declare.

BISHOPS: The Methodist Episcopal Church, The Methodist
Episcopal Church South and The Methodist Protestant Church
had their common origin in the organization of The Methodist
Episcopal Church in America in 1784, A.D., and have ever
held, adhered to and preserved a common belief, spirit and

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purpose, as expressed in their common Articles of Religion.

THE CONGREGATION: We do so declare.

BISHOPS: The Methodist Episcopal Church, The Methodist Episcopal Church South and The Methodist Protestant Church in adopting the name "The Methodist Church" for the United Church, do not and will not surrender any right, interest or title in and to these respective names which, by long and honored use and association, have become dear to the ministry and membership of the three uniting churches and have become enshrined in their history and records.

THE CONGREGATION: We do so declare.

BISHOPS: The Methodist Church is the ecclesiastical and lawful successor of the three uniting churches, and through which the three churches as one united church shall continue their institutions, and hold and enjoy their property, exercise and perform their several trusts, under and in accord with the Plan of Union and Discipline of the United Church; and such trusts or corporate bodies as exist in the constituent churches, shall be continued as long as legally necessary.

THE CONGREGATION: We do so declare.

BISHOPS: To The Methodist Church thus established, we do solemnly declare our allegiance, and upon all its life and service we do reverently invoke the blessing of Almighty God.

ALL HEADS ARE BOWED IN PRAYER.

Nov '45

BISHOPS: In the name of the Father, our God, by whose favor we live in this heritage of faith; to the honor of Jesus Christ, the son of the living God, our Lord and Saviour; to the praise of the Holy Spirit, source of light and power; we consecrate this communion of faith that is The Methodist Church.

THE CONGREGATION: Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts; heaven and earth are full of Thy Glory. Glory be to Thee, O Lord most high.

BISHOPS: We consecrate this Church for the worship of God in praise and prayer; for the ministry of the Word; for the celebration of the Holy Sacraments.

THE CONGREGATION: God is a spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in truth.

BISHOPS: We consecrate this Church for the guidance of childhood; for the sanctification of the family; for the training of youth in faith and knowledge.

THE CONGREGATION: Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth.

BISHOPS: We consecrate this Church for the edifying of the body of Christ; for the cure of souls that doubt; for the persuasion of those who have not yet believed; for the evangelization of the world; for the promotion of righteousness, Christian unity and good will.

THE CONGREGATION: All souls are mine, saith the Lord. ^{73.} In-asmuch as you did it unto the least of these, my brethren, ye did it unto me.

BISHOPS: We consecrate this Church for the redemption of characters; for brotherhood with all men; for the ennobling of this life and the deepening of the assurance of the life eternal.

THE CONGREGATION: The ransomed of the Lord shall come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy.

BISHOPS: We consecrate this Church in grateful remembrance of all who have loved and served the cause that is here consummated; in loving memory of those who have fared forth from this earthly habitation; in high hope for those who shall share in this heritage of faith in days to come.

THE CONGREGATION: Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts! Heaven and earth are full of Thee. Heaven and earth are praising thee, O Lord most high!

BISHOPS AND THE CONGREGATION: Having part among the people of God and the Church Universal in the inheritance of apostles and prophets, fathers and teachers, martyrs and evangelists; we give thanks unto the Father who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. Compassed about by so great a cloud of witnesses, we do here and now consecrate The Methodist Church to the worship of God and the establishment of his Kingdom among men everywhere,

through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

74.

MUSIC: THE HALLELUJAH CHORUS FROM HANDEL'S "MESSIAH"
IS SUNG BY THE CONGREGATION ON STAGE. FOLLOWING THIS,
THE AUDIENCE JOINS IN SINGING "O GOD OUR HELP IN AGES PAST."